

Crows On My Path

# Crows On My Path

## A Collection Of Poems

By Doug Tanoury



FUNKY DOG PUBLISHING



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DETROIT, MICHIGAN USA



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## **Crows On My Path**

**}}**

Her breasts like little pears were  
Sharply pointed at their tips and  
Resembled the farthest horizontal  
Peaks of twin parentheses

## **Crows On My Path**

**3/23/97**

The sunset sinks between the overcast  
And the horizon fills my back window  
And if I were a painter I would be  
Squeezing a tube of orange light paint  
Snaking and coiling on a wooden palette

The snow is canvas clean on the ground and  
The air is cold yet the color is hot on my face  
Before brilliance drops behind Patricia Street  
As color cools and overcast fills its place  
With shades of butterscotch and peach

Sunday afternoon moves to evening in  
Light shifting imperceptible as I watch  
From my kitchen across my yard and  
Over the line of low ranch housetops  
Where my horizon begins and days end

## **Crows On My Path**

### **April**

I heard a cardinal's song  
As I walked beneath a tree  
And searched still bare but  
Budding branches for color  
In blue gray light that glows  
Iridescent in eastern skies  
Just after sunset

I heard a cardinal's song  
But never saw the bird  
Through winter branches  
Against a sky spreading  
Darker color east to west  
Across a spring night  
Just after sunset

## **Crows On My Path**

### **Awakening**

I walk with her in the darkness  
Before sunrise when the eastern  
Sky begins to glow iridescent blue  
And the air fills with bird's songs

I hush her talking to listen to a chorus  
Of many species and a mixture of voices  
Awakening from trees lining our street  
Pines oaks elms and sycamores singing

And I want to leave all the things I do  
Undone today my office door locked  
And let stupidity lose its way groping  
Along dark hallways looking for me

I will be out in the day my breath visible  
Floating on the morning air like a song  
Born in a bird's throat broadcast through  
Bare branches in Spring calls to new life

And I will leave yesterdays like thrown off  
Bedsheets shrouds on the sarcophagus for  
I have remembered the red wheel barrow  
Walking in the morning with her today

## **Crows On My Path**

### **Birds**

Birds singing at dawn  
A host of rusty pulleys  
Hoisting up the sun



## **Crows On My Path**

### **Crows On My Path**

I watched two crows on a wooded path  
Along the river swollen with spring  
The stained waters bubbling in its bends

Two crows strutting like old men  
In black suits arrogant with swagger  
Take flight together to a barren perch

This has been a long season of crows  
Their caws echoing along the solitary  
Paths of me always in snow and rain

The sun was bright and sky clear  
The grass turned green in an instant  
Buds on trees foiled by white clouds

Yet I see crows flying still from path  
To tree like dark dreams they float  
With night on outstretched wings

I am deaf today to the water rippling  
In river current and songbirds calling  
From tall trees washed in sunlight

All I hear are two crows cawing from  
The highest bone white limbs of a Sycamore  
Refusing to be silenced by spring

## **Crows On My Path**

### **December Woods**

Alone on a wooded path  
Under a winter sky of heavy clouds  
Watching the river run washday gray  
Along bare banks of black soil  
Spotted with withered leaves  
And small patches of snow.  
Water boiling over half sunken  
Tree trunks is all I hear,

As thoughts suddenly stop  
And all the inner voices  
Fall into silence for a moment,  
And confusion is squirrels  
Rustling in fallen leaves and  
My anger is crows sitting  
On gaunt winter branches  
Like malignant growths.

## **Epicures and Me**

My jeans are too tight and  
I struggle with their buttons  
She says I've gained weight  
And I say my belly and rolls  
Like the seven hills of Rome  
Are a landmark of the  
Beginning and the end of me

She says too much fat around  
My heart as she finds food stains  
On my toga and I hear the lictor  
Whisper in my ear remember  
That you are a mortal man as  
I see the last light of sunset  
Shining tonight across the Tiber

## **Crows On My Path**

### **Two Finches**

I watched two finches  
Mating on a narrow ledge  
Under my porch awning

Their movements quick  
And repetitive like two  
Tiny windup toys

Building a nest nearby of  
Brown straw and grass the  
Color of Autumn fields

Teeter on the ledge now head  
Now tail they spin  
Like a bottle on its side

Twitching and hopping with  
Nervous excitement as if  
Powered by inner springs

Singing and fluttering near  
My window giving Spring dreams  
Song and wings to fly

## **Flower Power**

Like a wino sleeping  
In a doorway,  
My past is only  
Half-remembered:  
There were iris'  
And tiger lilies  
Growing that summer,  
Spreading out beyond  
Our yard and into  
The alleyway.  
Her roses were winding  
Their way through  
The rusted wire mesh  
Fence, their stems  
Entwining the metal  
Like snakes in a  
Caduceus.

I slept 'til midmornings  
Throughout that summer,  
Waking to her calling  
Me in Arabic  
With comic title  
And stern command:  
*"Gentle prince, get up!"*  
And I would, to the  
Smells of breakfast  
Cooking and pots clanging.  
I had nearly forgotten  
The summer of love,  
Will probably do so  
Again, until the next  
Morning I wake up  
And find  
Flower petals  
In my hair.

## **Crows On My Path**

### **Finch**

Scrawled on a legal  
Pad, a lone gold finch resting  
On a fragile branch.

## **Junkmen In Paradise**

Walking together in the park  
When light soft and fading  
Turns aspen leaves gold

Along paths lined with pines  
I pick puffs of dandelions and  
Blow seeds to airborne grace

And I tell her I never knew a place  
So perfect with trees in foliage quivering  
Where topmost leaves meet the sky

Silhouetted in last light aspens and oaks  
Stand like figures projected across  
A window shade on summer nights

I stare at needle-covered branches  
Of fine machining as if they were  
In a jeweler's display case

And even as junkmen on my street  
Tie down and move their shit in pickups  
I smell lilies of the valley that we picked

Never knowing a place so perfect  
That I cannot touch it but must wait  
To be touched on June nights

**Kiss Of Lazarus**

I want to sit alone  
On a green wooden bench  
Carved with crude  
Cryptic marking of bored  
Teenagers, sunning myself  
On the far side of the pier  
Facing the lake, and watching  
The rusting black hulls  
Of the ore freighters  
Sailing on the soft  
Line of the horizon.  
I want to sit quietly  
Without thinking,  
And when I come home  
To you, I will be like Lazarus  
Stumbling from the tomb  
On unsteady legs,  
Shielding my eyes from  
The sunlight with both hands,  
The only thought in my head,  
A longing to taste your mouth  
On my lips.



## **A Landscape**

There were raindrops  
On my office window  
Some beaded and  
Some streaked like  
An artist's brushstrokes

Framed in the window  
A landscape of grays  
Smudged and blurred  
With crows flying under  
Low storm clouds

The sun shines darkness  
And objects soak up light  
Under clouds that never clear  
And drizzle that never stops  
In skies where only crows fly

### Last Words

I had a dream I met  
The ghost of my father  
In an all-night supermarket.  
I was walking down the produce  
And frozen food aisle  
When I saw him following me,  
Walking close behind,  
But I did not recognize him  
Until he spoke the name  
Of my childhood: "*Hi Dougie*"  
As I heard his voice  
I knew him at once.  
I turned to hug him,  
And for one long moment  
In the brightly lit store  
Between the prickly pears  
And frozen pizzas  
We stood embracing.  
He never spoke again,  
And I too not speaking,  
Just held him.

## **Lines Remembered**

I remembered  
The first lines  
Of Elliot's Four Quartets:  
*"Time past  
And time present  
Are contained in time future."*  
As the dark clouds gathered  
And the rain began,  
Splattering the concrete,  
Striking the grasses,  
Making each blade  
Tremble with the impact.

And in the storm born confusion  
I saw my past and present open  
Like a simple book  
Of children's prayers,  
As the rain soaked in  
To be transformed  
Into growth  
And a fragile greenness  
That sways  
In the weakest breeze.

## **Matthew Whistling**

I thought I heard Matthew whistling  
While listening to a baroque concerto.  
I thought perhaps it was the violins  
Or maybe the flutes  
That made me think of his  
Coming and going with sounds  
Bubbling up in him.

I thought I heard Matthew whistling.  
Suddenly and so deeply  
I felt him gone,  
Floating off in a baroque tune  
Slightly lighter than air.  
The sounds of him  
Lost in the instruments.

## **Crows On My Path**

### **Overcast Skies**

I watch crows fly under overcast skies  
From my office window  
And I think perhaps Spring won't come

And I will live my life in sunless Winter  
With leafless trees  
Adorned with plastic shopping bags

And other litter lifted airborne and trapped  
On bare branches that  
Blow endlessly in the winds on dark days

I catch glimpses of clouds thick and low  
Speeding from west to  
East and dip in grayness to the horizon

Between a phone call's forgotten and  
Inane conversation  
I look up to see the flight of black wings

Or raven like and perched on a high  
Parapet of the building  
Feathers ruffled and beak crying caw

My days are so many poems by Poe  
In melancholy meter  
To noisy for whispered Nevermores

## **Crows On My Path**

### **Tell Me**

Tell me Penelope,  
That old-fashioned fidelity  
Is not the vanished virtue  
Of the golden age of myth,  
That faithfulness occasionally  
Appears even in less than  
Heroic times, and steadfastness  
Has not gone the way of the  
Bronze breastplate. Tell me  
You saw no dawn dancing from  
Your chamber window, rising  
Above the eastern sea like a  
Golden haired maiden, but only  
Blue waves marked by white  
Foam going on forever.

Tell me Penelope  
Of forgone adultery,  
How temptation makes resolve  
Flicker like a lamp flame  
Caught in the sea breeze and  
Vanishes leaving a glowing wick  
Smoldering in darkness. Tell me  
You saw no dawn peeking play-  
Fully above the sea like a rosy  
Faced young girl, but only sea  
Birds flying under clouded skies,  
And a lone merchant ship rolling  
On the waves as it makes toward  
The harbor.

## **Crows On My Path**

### **Purple Twilight**

I live in purple twilight  
As days hang cobalt blue  
Outside my window at  
Midday

I watch crows fly slow  
Under thick clouds looking  
Hard and rugged over the  
Expansive

Parking lot that stretches like  
A fallow field and is the landscape  
Colorless and drained of  
Light

That has migrated to a temperate  
Climate where birds-of-paradise bloom  
And pines, junipers and palms  
Grow

Together against a horizon of hills  
Rising green into the sky and washed  
In summer light that has left me  
Alone

In winter dreams I see the barn red  
Caissons of the Golden Gate bridge  
Over wind-textured waters without  
Crows

## **Crows On My Path**

### **Red Wheelbarrow**

I didn't notice the sunrise orange  
Boiling over the horizon from my  
Office window

Or a crow flying black against the  
Winter sky the tips of its wings  
Foiling upward

I live in a morning without poetry  
Where the modular furniture is  
January gray

And metaphors lose their way in  
Aisles narrow maze and images  
Left forgotten

Like cold coffee in office pots  
And similes yellow wilt like  
Tropical plants

In the reception lobby waiting at  
The elevators I have forgotten a  
Red wheelbarrow



**Scottsbluff**

I want to go to the top of the bluffs  
On jagged tan peaks butting  
Against a cloudless blue, to see  
Wind gusting strong and unceasing  
At pines, twisting and fidgeting  
On pedestals of bedrock,  
And junipers spasming,  
Standing straight  
On Slopes deeply steeping  
Toward a town of tiny houses  
And tall factory smokestacks  
Set in the black and white  
Landscape of Nebraska  
In February.

## **Crows On My Path**

### **Shoreline**

The grass is brightly lush and tree branches  
I noticed are growing from graphite to green  
As Spring works it's way from earth to sky

Persephone finds release in tulip sprouts and  
Daffodil blooms and I record and document  
Breezes whispering in ornamental dogwoods

I dreamt today of a solitary strip of shore  
Along Lake Huron where I want to sit on the  
Beach and listen to the metered beat of waves

There is a path through a pine forest that follows  
The river's twists and bends that I walk so  
Clearly in dreams that I hear my footsteps

Like Persephone my journey from the underworld  
Is a slow waking a somnambulistic escape  
From plutonian gloom and Hades' chill

Lake Huron is polished lapis lazuli in the distance  
Near the shore it is cut jade and in my dreams  
I sit on the sand scanning trochaic waves

## **Tall Spruce**

There is a tall spruce  
On the corner of my street  
That is a gothic cathedral  
Alive with motion when winds blow

When I stand beneath it I am  
Filled with sacristy awe and quiet  
adoration as if I were looking  
Up at vaulted and coffered ceilings

Each branch a cluster of finials  
Pointing upward as if each  
Needled twig is buttressed aloft  
In chloroformed benediction

Every spruce points to God  
Limbs untiring and raised  
In evergreen worship swaying  
In the subdued winds of May

## Crows On My Path

### For Terra

Dark haired girl  
In a yellow sundress,  
Picking cattails that grow  
Along the creek in a field  
Behind the house,  
You return from your walks  
Empty handed these days,  
Without cattails,  
Without daisies,  
As if these do not grow  
On the fringes of your  
Childhood, and Queen Anne's Lace  
Is just another weed  
In open fields.

Dark haired girl,  
Who outgrew the yellow  
Sundress long ago,  
Is the sky still Mason jar blue  
Or does that fade too  
With time into overcast gray,  
As fields become subdivisions,  
And creeks are diverted  
Underground in large  
Concrete pipes.

Walk with me just once more,  
On the path east of the dogwoods,  
Calling out the names  
Of each tree we pass,  
The way I taught you,  
When you wore a yellow sundress,  
And the creek still ran  
Over green mossed rocks,  
And cattails grew fat  
On thin reeds, just once more,  
Let me hear you  
Call a birch  
A poplar

## **Crows On My Path**

### **Trembling**

(A Reluctant Love Poem)

Today  
An August sky opened  
And white clouds parted  
And I trembled.  
And a great hand reached  
Out of heaven  
As the sky blackened  
And I trembled.  
And giant fingers  
Closed about  
My chest with steady and  
Increasing pressure  
And did not stop  
Until the words  
Trembled on my lips:  
"God help me!  
I love you,  
I truly do."  
And heaven was new  
And the earth was new  
And the world  
Trembling and new  
Began today.

## **Einstein's Undershorts**

He had a fondness for simple, unlettered women,  
Peasant types that congregate in open air markets,  
Stopping at this stall to tell that tale and that stall  
To tell this tale, women who's thoughts never seem  
To escape the pull of gravity, but worship at the  
Golden cow of here-and-now. Late at night, when  
Fame comes off with the clothes, he was simply  
Her Albert, and she an old-world wife, who  
Preparing his meals and washing his shorts, saw  
A part of him that others did not know, rising on  
Dark winter mornings to cook his breakfast, stopping  
To sit at the kitchen table, wetting a finger on her  
Tongue and rubbing a soiled spot on her wrinkled  
Blue house dress, never questioning for a moment,  
The light bending properties of love.

## **Winter Landscape**

The black and white  
Winter landscape  
Is the setting for the  
Crow's swagger and  
Strut in a snowy road.

They fly into trees  
Finding their perches  
In highest branches.  
As I approach they call  
To one another.

I watch them in trees  
Leafless, stark and unreal  
Like x-ray images read in  
The weak background light  
Of a December sky.

## **Crows On My Path**

### **Winter Leaf**

Today the snow melted  
Under a sky clear of clouds  
And lit

Bright with sunlight and  
I found myself like a  
Buddhist monk

Awake to a quiet moment as  
I tiptoe through puddles on  
The walk

And I saw that what I thought  
Was a bird in a bare winter  
Branch was

Only a brown leaf clinging  
Stubbornly alone on a tree  
A reminder

Of something beyond the  
Season where promise perches  
Bird like

And poised for flight as a  
Morning dove sits still and  
Leaf like



## **Crows On My Path**

### **Yellow**

Goldfinch  
Summer sunrise on its wings  
Pauses rhythmic and musical  
Hot buttered flight to perch  
A moment on the pine tree's  
Filial

## **Crows On My Path**

### **Wounded Angel**



Feathers on the closet floors  
Of psychiatric wards  
There are angels everywhere

## About Doug Tanoury



Doug Tanoury is primarily a poet of the Internet with the majority of his work never leaving electronic form. His verse can be read at electronic magazines and journals across the world. Collections of poetry by Doug Tanoury can be found at Funky Dog Publishing

<http://www.funkydoggpublishing.com> and Athens Avenue  
<http://mywebpages.comcast.net/dtanoury1/Athens/index.htm>

This and other ebook collections of poetry by Doug Tanoury can be read and downloaded at: <http://home.comcast.net/~dtanoury1/Tanoury.html>

Doug grew up in Detroit, Michigan and still lives in the area.

Doug Tanoury credits his 7th grade poetry anthology from Sister Debra's English class, *Reflections On A Gift Of Watermelon Pickle And Other Modern Verse*, (Stephen Dunning, Edward Lueders and Hugh Smith, (c)1966 by Scott Foresman & Company) as exerting the greatest influence on his work. He still keeps a copy of it at his writing desk.